

County approves fee system to pay for roads

Homeowners, retailers, developers will see 32 percent increase in impact fees in '08

By **KARTIKAY MEHROTRA**
kmehrotra@kcchronicle.com

GENEVA – After 18 months of debate and revisions, the Kane County Board on Tuesday unanimously approved a road impact fee plan to pay for future road projects.

Road impact fees will increase by 32 percent Jan. 1, 2008, for all homeowners, devel-

opers, retailers and service providers not exempt from the fees.

This will raise money for Kane County's more than \$1 billion long-term road improvement plan.

"The constituency of the board has made it very clear that it is their desire to have new development pay for itself; that's the purpose of the trans-

portation impact fee," said board member Jan Carlson, R-Elburn.

The fees will rise by 8 percent for all new construction in Kane County on July 1 of every year until 2011, when the board will review the plan.

State statute requires counties to review the plan every five years.

"When we pass ordinances, they're on paper; they're not in stone," said board member Gerry Jones, D-Aurora. "All of these endeavors are human endeavors. Things can be adjusted."

Some municipalities fear that the fees will scare off development.



Jan Carlson
County Board
member, R-Elburn.

See FEES, page 7A

KANE COUNTY CHRONICLE / kcchronicle.com

Despite some complaints, board says plan is needed

• FEES

Continued from page 1A

"It actually stymies our growth; retail, commercial and industrial; ... when I look at a fast-food restaurant, five years from now it will cost \$32,000 just in impact fees," said Perry Clark, director of Sugar Grove's Economic Development Corp. "Other communities have their fair share of fast-food places, but growing communities are affected tremendously. They didn't take any consideration of the smaller communities."

Board members said the plan was needed to maintain county roads, despite some municipal complaints.

"They're the ones who cry the loudest," said Don Wolfe, R-Elgin. "Cities run on retail tax and development fees, and many of them have pretty substantial fees in place. The price on the product narrows the market, but the road impact fee is just a fraction of what cities collect."

Board Chairman Karen McConnaughay said municipal governments and the Metro West Council of Governments were offered individual presentations on the plan and

were included in the plan's revision process.

"There was a task force that really put together the revisions to the impact fee ... and was made up of three mayors, laborers, home builders, real-estate agents, people from business, and retail," McConnaughay said. "The county, I believe, did an outstanding job."

Clark said the village would try to work with developers to approve new projects before the new fees started.

"Obviously, we have a couple years where the fee is a slight increase over the current charge," Clark said. "But years three, four and five are killers. ... We're on the phone with [retailers and developers] telling them that if they're going to pull the trigger, they should do it now."

Sugar Grove has been working with Cleveland-based developers Forest City on a multimillion-dollar commercial hub and town center since March 21, 2006.

If the two sides can approve a final plat for the project by the end of 2007, Forest City would avoid Kane County's updated fee.